

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

CAPTAIN TIMOTHY I. MCGOVERN

Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, I rise today with a heavy heart and deep sense of gratitude to honor the life of a brave soldier from Idaville, IN. CPT Timothy McGovern, 28 years old, died October 31 in Mosul, Iraq. Captain McGovern died of injuries he sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle. With an optimistic future before him, Timothy risked everything to fight for the values Americans hold close to our hearts, in a land halfway around the world.

Timothy was a graduate of Twin Lakes High School and Purdue University, where he began his military service in the Reserve Officers Training Corps. At Twin Lakes, he was a leader on the football team and ran on the track team. His football coach and uncle, Mike Wright, said that he could depend on Timothy on the field because of his intelligence and positive attitude. He always supported his teammates. Later in life, he would support his fellow soldiers.

Timothy wanted to be a soldier nearly all his life, and he believed strongly in the goals of our engagement in Iraq. Two weeks before his death, Timothy spoke to a local radio station about the positive impact Americans at home can have on the morale of the soldiers abroad, saying, "Any support they get, any letters they get, anything like that is great for morale and lets the soldiers here know that people still care about them and care about what they're doing."

Timothy was serving a second tour of duty when he died. He was a member of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division from Fort Bliss, TX. For his service and sacrifice, he was awarded the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star. Timothy is survived by his parents, LTC Colonel Bill McGovern and Jonell McGovern, and his sister, Miranda.

Today, I join Timothy's family and friends in mourning his death. While we struggle to bear our sorrow over this loss, we can also take pride in the example he set, bravely fighting to make the world a safer place. It is his courage and strength of character that people will remember when they think of Timothy. Today and always, Timothy will be remembered by family members, friends, and fellow Hoosiers as a true American hero, and we honor the sacrifice he made while dutifully serving his country.

As I search for words to do justice in honoring Timothy's sacrifice, I am reminded of President Lincoln's remarks as he addressed the families of the fallen soldiers in Gettysburg: "We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here." This state-

ment is just as true today as it was nearly 150 years ago, as I am certain that the impact of Timothy's actions will live on far longer than any record of these words.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of CPT Timothy I. McGovern in the official RECORD of the U.S. Senate for his service to this country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy, and peace. When I think about this just cause in which we are engaged and the unfortunate pain that comes with the loss of our heroes, I hope that families like Timothy's can find comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah, who said, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

May God grant strength and peace to those who mourn, and may God be with all of you, as I know He is with Timothy.

HEALTHY AMERICANS ACT

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, as I travel and talk to folks across Minnesota, one thing is abundantly clear—Minnesotans, like most Americans, are more concerned about health care than just about any other issue—and for good reason.

As a Nation, we are spending about \$2.2 trillion on health care each year, about 16 percent of GDP. This is more than twice what many other developed countries spend, yet 47 million of our fellow Americans are uninsured. And even those with insurance are worried. Worried about the escalating cost of premiums, whether their children will be covered, or whether they will lose their health plan at work.

One thing we can all agree on is that inaction is not an option. As these concerns grow and the costs continue to increase, the problem will only get more complex and more difficult to solve. The time for solutions is now.

It is in the spirit of finding a solution to our Nation's health care crisis that I recently joined four of my Republican colleagues as a cosponsor of Senator RON WYDEN's Healthy Americans Act. While this is certainly not a perfect solution, it is not "Government-run" or "single-payer" health care. It is a private market, consumer-focused proposal that serves as a good place to start the discussion. Yet, as a cosponsor, I think it is also important that I point out some of the areas where I disagree with this legislation.

One area of concern has to do with transitioning people from employer-based insurance to the private market. The Healthy Americans Act severs the ties between employment and health insurance and shifts everyone into the individual market. Instead, I think the Government should level the playing field regarding taxation of health benefits, so workers can leave their employer, start a new business, change jobs, or spend more time at home with their family without risking their health care coverage.

Another area where I strongly disagree with Senator WYDEN is his requirement that health insurance companies cover abortions. I have never wavered in my support for pro-life policies. While I am willing to work with Senator WYDEN on this bill in the interest of improving access to health insurance, I will absolutely not support passage of any legislation that requires coverage of abortions. This is one area of the bill that must be reconsidered.

I have also expressed concerns to my colleagues about using the Federal Employees Health Benefits Plan, FEHBP, as the standard for health insurance. While I certainly believe people should have access to this level of coverage, I don't think it should be the only option. My vision of health reform does not include this one-size-fits-all approach. Instead, I support giving people access to a variety of health insurance options and the ability to make informed choices.

While these are a few of the areas where I disagree with Senator WYDEN, there are definitely provisions in this bill that I will work to preserve or even expand upon. I am pleased that the legislation focuses on more than just expanding coverage but also on reforming the health care system and providing peace of mind that a person's coverage won't end when his or her employment situation changes. The Healthy Americans Act provides incentives for preventive health care, expands wellness programs, and emphasizes important cost containment measures. It also promotes greater adoption of health information technology and enacts vital medical malpractice reforms.

As you can probably see, the Healthy Americans Act is a work in progress. But as I said before, it is a good place to start the discussion. That is why I look forward to working with Senator WYDEN and all of the cosponsors of the Healthy Americans Act to make sure we come up with a proposal that provides the health care choices we all want, the quality we need, and the health care security the American people deserve.

NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I wish to acknowledge National Adoption Awareness Month and National Adoption Day on Nov. 17, 2007. With over 114,000 children available for adoption out of the U.S. foster care system, I think it is crucial to celebrate those lawyers, social workers, officials and, most importantly, parents who help many children move from foster homes to adoptive families.

Adoption has personally touched my life this year as two new children have been welcomed as members of my family. My son Brendan and his wife Jana recently adopted Trualem, age 11, and Peneal, age 8, from Ethiopia. I am now a proud grandfather of five, and our family is larger and richer with them in it.

National Adoption Day was started in 2000 by the Alliance for Children's Rights, the Freddie Mac Foundation, and the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption and helped complete foster care adoptions in nine jurisdictions in its first year. National Adoption Day has quickly grown since that time. In 2006, a milestone was surpassed, as National Adoption Day was celebrated in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico for the first time. In total last year, over 3,300 adoptions were finalized on National Adoption Day.

I am committed to assisting children in the United States to find stable, loving, and permanent homes. Additionally, I support the goals of National Adoption Day to encourage others to adopt children from foster care, to build stronger ties between local adoption agencies, courts, and adoption advocacy organizations, and to continue to research and learn more about families wanting to adopt and the children waiting to be adopted.

I am proud that Members of the Senate continue to support ways to make adoption easier and more affordable. Since the cost of adoption can be very high, we ought to do what we can to lessen this initial burden for the exceptional people who provide caring homes for children. Adoption proceedings and legal fees for some domestic adoptions can cost more than \$40,000. To ease some of this burden, Congress adopted a \$10,000 tax credit for adoption expenses. If we ask individuals to care for and adopt children, we must provide some relief from the financial burdens associated with that care. The adoption tax credit is an effective vehicle to provide this relief, and it is vitally important that this tax credit does not expire at the end of 2010.

In keeping with the celebration of adoption, this year I am proud to recognize Audrey Kirkpatrick as an Angel in Adoption. Audrey is a social worker with Catholic Social Services in Rapid City, SD. She is an integral part of Catholic Social Services offering her knowledge to fellow employees and often her services to birth mothers and adoptive families 24 hours per day.

I am also proud to recognize the Amiotte family, whose portrait is displayed in my front office as a part of the Voice of Adoption Adoptive Family Portrait Project. David and Malinda Amiotte began their foster care experience not planning to adopt. However, after meeting and growing attached to biological siblings Medina and David, and biological sisters JoAnne and Karen, David and Malinda wanted to keep these sibling groups together. Despite challenges with the legal process, adoptions for all of their children have been finalized, and I wish them many years of happiness in the future.

The commitment of adoptive parents in South Dakota and throughout our country to provide children with safe, permanent, and loving homes will, of course, have a positive impact on their

lives. As we celebrate National Adoption Awareness Month and National Adoption Day, I call on my colleagues to continue supporting efforts to make adoption easier for parents, children, and other important participants in the adoption process.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I would like to add my voice to the growing chorus, in the Senate and across the world, supporting Senate ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

While we have made great strides towards eradicating blatant discrimination based on race or social class in our country, far too many women around the world continue to face oppression and violence simply because of their gender.

While it may be easy to believe that this only is a foreign problem, one that does not exist in our homes, this is simply not the case. An estimated 30 percent of American women experience some form of assault in their lifetime. And even if women do not experience violence, discrimination can take many other forms. Hundreds of millions of women across the globe are living their lives facing oppression. Despite all the advancements towards social equality, there still exists a strong undercurrent of gender-based prejudice.

Beyond simply striking it from our laws, we must also strike it from our hearts and demonstrate that ending discrimination means recognizing basic rights. All women should have access to health care. All women should have access to education. And all women should be allowed to live their lives free of fear.

The United States has always represented a beacon of hope and opportunity to oppressed peoples around the world. While our Nation is among the best in ensuring equal rights and opportunities to women, we must never grow complacent in this constant struggle or believe that we have conquered sex-based discrimination.

That is why I believe it is so important that the Senate ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Ratification of this Convention represents a step towards empowerment, not just of American women but women everywhere.

Ratification also presents an opportunity to reassert American values to the world. At a time when our Nation's image abroad is under assault and our commitment to fundamental human rights and norms has been questioned, it is critical that we reaffirm our repudiation of discrimination in all forms.

The full realization of women's rights is vital to the development and well-being of people of all nations. The United States becoming a member of this convention is an important step toward that reality.

I urge my colleagues to join me in calling for the prompt ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CHESHIRE HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS SWIM TEAM

• Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I offer my heartfelt congratulations to some of Connecticut's finest high school athletes: the girls swim team of Cheshire High School. Cheshire High recently set a national record with an astounding 235 dual meet wins in a row.

With its victory, Cheshire High breaks a record that had been held for 13 years by Elkhart Central High in Indiana—one of the longest-standing, most respected marks in high school swimming. Even more incredibly, the Connecticut streak dates back all the way to 1986, before any members of the current team were born.

Their record-setting night brought together parents who decorated the pool, painted their faces, and dressed up as the school's Ram mascot; more than 200 paying spectators; and the support of an entire community. For a town still struggling to overcome the memory of last July's notorious home-invasion murders, it was a joyous community celebration; I hope it will go a little way toward restoring the spirit of this Connecticut town.

For their teamwork and success, I applaud the Cheshire High swimmers:

Megan Aitro, Tara Aitro, Olivia Amato, Alexandria Barry, Jessica Bauer, Kailee Brown, Bridget Carmichael, Alyssa Carofano, Tina Chang, Katherine Collins, Kayla DeLuca, Adriana DiCenzo, Nicole Dicks, Rachael Dioses, Kelly Dolyak, Danielle Forrest, Amy Hudak, Kathryn Hummel, Kimberly Jerome, Jasmine Liu, Samantha Loignon, Shirin Lowell, Sofia Martone, Alexandra Maurice, Mairin McKinlay, Jessica Metcalf, Melissa Metcalf, Michaela Morr, Jessica Morse, Megan Mostoller, Stephanie Nguyen, Catherine Patrell, Brianna Perazella, Lauren Piccolino, Emilie Ptaszynski, Elissa Rosenfield, Sarah Schulefand, Morgan Schwenn, Meghan Shanahan, Sydney Smith, Jennifer Thompson, Margaret Tooley, Emma Velcofsky, and Elizabeth Visconti.

Congratulations are due as well their assistant coaches, William Lapman and Kristen Shanley, and their dedicated coach, Ed Aston, whom his team pulled, fully dressed, into the pool once the record was broken.

It is a true team, and town, achievement; and if I could list here the names of all 278 athletes who contributed their part to the streak, I certainly would. Instead I simply extend my admiration and my best wishes for many more wins to come.●